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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this motion to recommit is straightforward. It seeks to protect America's senior citizens and those who serve in our Armed Forces.

My colleagues on the other side contend that a new law is needed to cover crimes against persons based on race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. The motion to recommit makes sure that seniors and our military personnel are added to the list of protected groups.

We all care greatly about the safety and security of our senior citizens. We all understand that they are particularly vulnerable to crime. Criminals who prey on our senior citizens because they are senior citizens should be vigorously prosecuted and punished.

The statistics paint a disturbing picture of violence against senior citizens in our country. A recent Justice Department study found that each year over the last 10 years, for every 1,000 persons over 65, four are violently assaulted. This includes rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assaults. Approximately 65 percent of these crimes against senior citizens are committed by strangers or casual acquaintances. In my hometown, the San Antonio police report rising crime against the elderly, with over 6,200 crimes just this last year.

We were all horrified by the recent videotaped robbery in New York City committed against 101-year-old Rose Morat. Rose was leaving her building to go to church when a robber, who pretended to help her through the vestibule, turned and delivered three hard punches to her face and grabbed her purse. He pushed her and her walker to the ground. Rose suffered a broken cheekbone and was hospitalized. The robber got away with \$33 and her house keys. Police believe the same man robbed an 85-year-old woman shortly after beating Rose.

These are horrible crimes that strike fear into the hearts of America's senior citizens and make them wonder whether they will be victimized next.

This motion to recommit also adds the category of current or former members of the Armed Forces to the list of groups in this bill. We honor our men and women of the military because of their patriotism, their commitment to protecting our freedom and their service to our country. In times of controversy surrounding the use of our military, we have seen unfortunate acts by those who use their hostility towards the military to further their political agenda.

With the rising debate over the Iraq war, we are seeing increasing threats to Iraqi war veterans. Recently, a Syracuse woman pleaded guilty to spitting in the face of a Fort Drum soldier at an airport.

Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to make it clear to everyone that we honor our veterans and current members of our Armed Forces. Congress can make the message clear that hate of our Armed Forces will be punished at a heightened level, just like the other groups under this act.

If Congress rejects this motion to recommit, who will explain to the thousands of victims who are senior citizens or military victims that their injuries are less important than those of others protected under the hate crimes law? Are we really prepared to tell seniors and our men and women in uniform across our country that crimes committed against victims because of race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability are, as a rule, more worthy of punishment than those committed against seniors and military personnel?

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support this motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the distinguished gentleman from Texas, Mr. SMITH, would he yield for a unanimous consent request that the bill be amended as follows: Page 12, line 5 after "orientation" insert "status as a senior citizen who has attained the age of 65 years; status as a current or former member of the armed services."

Would the gentleman yield for a unanimous consent request on that?

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman does not yield.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman from Texas, Mr. SMITH, the proponent of the motion to recommit, yield for a unanimous consent request that the motion be amended by striking the word "promptly" and inserting the word "forthwith?"

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I also object to that request.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas does not yield for that purpose.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I notice that the motion being offered by the gentleman provides the bill be reported back to the House "promptly" rather than reported back "forthwith."

Is it true, as I believe to be the case, that the effect of the word "promptly" is that the House is not being asked to amend this bill, but to send it off the Floor and back to the Judiciary Committee?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The adoption of a motion to recommit with

instructions to report back "promptly" sends the bill back to committee, whose eventual report, if any, would not be immediately before the House.

Does the gentleman from Michigan seek time in opposition to the motion to recommit?

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I do.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Michigan yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am not inclined to at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes in opposition to the motion to recommit.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the motion to recommit, which would not operate as a simple amendment, but, listen to me, would instead send the bill back to the Committee on the Judiciary, in essence killing the bill for the remainder of the Congress.

The categories of individuals included in the amendment, seniors and members of the armed services, are entitled to protection under the law, and in point of fact they have protection under the law at both Federal and State levels. I note that it is already a Federal crime to kill or attempt to kill any member of the armed services under 18 U.S.C. 1114.

We also have programs in the law to provide assistance to prosecutors and law enforcement in the enforcement of crimes against elders, as well as a variety of senior services that will help them in their homes, safety and elder care.

The purpose of the bill is to protect classes of individuals who have been and are the group-wide victims of systemic violence: hanging a man because of his race, dragging someone to death because they are disabled. These are crimes that are designed to target and intimidate entire groups of individuals, and we all know it. That is why they are labeled hate crimes and why this legislation is before us.

As much as any Member here, I believe we can and should do more to protect other members of society. That is why our Committee on the Judiciary approved a COPS bill yesterday, reauthorizing a program to provide for 100,000 local police on the beat and other safety officials. That is why I have in the past pushed for an Elder Justice Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the distinguished chairman.

This motion, my colleagues, reeks with the stench of cynicism. Let me tell you why. The distinguished chairman rose and asked for unanimous consent to add the protections to members of our Armed Forces who are either serving or have served, and he then asked to protect our senior citizens. He